Kingdom – Part 2
By: Ali Haidar

Prince Lorenzo and Princess Sandra lived happily in their kingdom. Their children were growing fast, and everything seemed perfect. Lorenzo was a kind-hearted man and a beloved king. All his people admired him, and peace filled the land.

One night, at midnight, while they slept in their castle with the windows closed, a black hand appeared on one of the windows and slowly opened it. Two figures dressed in tight black suits and masks—only their eyes visible—entered the room. Their shiny swords glimmered under the moonlight. Without making a sound, one moved toward Lorenzo, and the other toward Sandra. Their children slept beside them.

The masked figures carefully lifted the children from their beds. Just as they were about to leave, one of the kids began to cry. The kidnapper quickly covered the child's mouth, trying to silence the noise—but Sandra woke up. She screamed loudly, waking Lorenzo.

Both masked intruders pointed their swords toward the couple. One of them, in a woman's voice, said, "If you move, none of you will live. You'd better keep quiet."

Lorenzo shouted, "Who are you? What do you want from us?"

The woman replied coldly, "We got what we came for." Then both jumped out of the window with the children.

Lorenzo rushed to alert the guards, but when he stepped into the hallway, he froze. Blood covered the floor, and the bodies of his guards lay everywhere. He moved slowly, stepping over the dead, his heart pounding. Reaching the front gate, he saw a sword stuck in the ground with a bloodstained paper hanging from it. It read: "The answer is in the Alpha Kingdom."

Terrified, Lorenzo ran back to his room—but Sandra was gone. He searched everywhere until he looked out the window. In the moonlight, he saw a rider on a horse. Sandra was tied behind them, her hands bound and her mouth covered. Tears filled her eyes as she looked back at him.

Without hesitation, Lorenzo jumped out the window to follow her, but the kidnappers vanished into the dark. Every horse in the stable was dead. Tears fell from his eyes as he dropped to his knees, head bowed in despair.

Fear. Anger. Revenge.

He stood up, grabbed his sword, and began walking toward the Alpha Kingdom under the midnight sky—his hair messy, sweat on his face, blood on his feet, moving like a man possessed. Along the road, he found a stray horse and mounted it, beginning his journey into the unknown.

After four days of relentless riding—day and night—Lorenzo finally reached the Alpha Kingdom.

It had been five long years since Alpha's death and the silence that followed. When Lorenzo arrived at the castle, the guards didn't stop him—they simply stepped aside. Confused, he entered the grand hall.

There, at the dining table, he saw Sandra sitting on one side—and across from her, a beautiful woman he didn't recognize. Sandra stood, ran to him, and hugged him tightly. Both of them cried.

The woman smiled and said, "Welcome back to the world of the cruel king, Lorenzo."

"Who are you?" Lorenzo demanded.

She laughed softly. "I suppose you've never seen me before. I am the one for whom Alpha was called a playboy and a pleasure-seeker—the one for whom he sacrificed everything."

"Get to the point," Lorenzo said sharply. "What do you want from us?"

The woman's expression darkened. "I want to know what happened that day. Why was he poisoned? Who destroyed our lives?"

Lorenzo looked puzzled. "Was he poisoned? I didn't know. We were talking, and suddenly he collapsed when Sandra touched him. We panicked and left. That's all."

"Hmm," the woman murmured. "Please, have a seat. Otherwise, you'll never see your children again."

Lorenzo and Sandra sat down nervously.

"Can I ask you something?" she continued.

"Yes," Lorenzo replied.

"Do you know why Alpha brought teenage girls to the castle?"

"Because he was a playboy," Lorenzo answered coldly.

The woman smiled sadly. "No. Because he was in love with me. I was alone and had nowhere to go. He found me and brought me here. He could have done anything to me—right or wrong—but he never touched me because I didn't want him to. Whatever I wished for, he gave me. Over time, I fell in love with him. He had feelings too, but he never expressed them, afraid to hurt me.

"No one in the kingdom knew I existed. He was kind to everyone, but people only saw what they wanted to see. He brought young girls because he saw me in them. I was the one who showed them around the castle. Alpha never came near them. Before each girl left, I told her to stay silent—because it was my happiness.

"We were about to be married the day you were invited. I wore a beautiful white gown, ready to begin a new life. But when I came down… he was on the ground, dead. Someone had poisoned his food."

Tears filled Sandra's eyes. "I'm so sorry to hear that. But we didn't do anything. We even named our son Alpha—because he was kind to me."

The woman wiped her tears and whispered, "Why me? I wanted a happy life too. Don't I deserve one? Or was Alpha the one who didn't deserve it?"

Lorenzo replied gently, “Everyone deserves happiness. But hurting others for it is not right. What’s your name?”

“Alpha called me Zoey,” she said softly.

“Miss Zoey,” Lorenzo said, “what can we do for you so you’ll leave us in peace?”

Zoey answered, “Be the king of Alpha’s Kingdom. Live here with Sandra. I’ve already punished the one who killed Alpha—she was one of the guests that day. I destroyed her kingdom.”

Lorenzo was shocked. “What? How did you even find out? You’re lying!”

Zoey’s eyes flared. “If I wanted, you’d be dead right now. Don’t test me. Your kingdom is already gone. Accept this and stay here.”

Lorenzo protested, “Why me? This isn’t my land.”

Zoey smiled faintly. “Because I believe in you. You’re the only one worthy to rule here. After you, your children will continue.”

Sandra said quietly, “Fine. He will stay. He will rule the Alpha Kingdom. These people are now our people.”

Lorenzo agreed. The next day, Zoey announced him as king, and the people accepted him.

Days later, Sandra asked Zoey, “How much did you love Alpha?”

Zoey replied, “Love has no limits. It can’t be forced. If I love someone, I don’t expect them to love me back. If he’s happy without me, and I still try to make him mine—what kind of love is that? True love means being willing to sacrifice everything just to see them happy.”

Sandra whispered, “You had a true love.”

“I had,” Zoey said quietly.

Later that evening, everyone gathered for dinner—but Zoey wasn’t there. Sandra went to her room to call her. As she opened the door, a horrifying scream escaped her lips. Lorenzo rushed in.

Zoey hung from the ceiling by a rope. A note lay on her bed. Sandra picked it up and read the words written in shaky ink:

“I am going to Alpha. Don’t worry.”

The End.